

# The Builder.

No. CCCCXXVI.

SATURDAY, JUNE 14, 1851.

**A**T the time when the Pope had "frighted the iale from its propriety," a friend of ours, who, in getting on to the box of an omnibus, said "it is a wet day," was received by the coachman with "Thankye, Sir, for that very sensible observation. You're the first gentleman for a whole fortnight that has spoken about anything but the papal aggression!" On the same grounds, now that the Great Exhibition (and a great exhibition it truly is in every sense of the word) has swallowed up everything, not excepting the first-named potentate, and is spoken of everywhere, we suspect some of our readers are obliged to us for not giving them quite so much about the all-engrossing subject as we might easily have done. Our contemporaries of the daily and weekly press have entered so fully and ably into it, that there are now few portions of the wonderful collection that have not been described again and again.\* Nevertheless, we should not do our duty to our readers if we did not continue occasionally to turn to it, and we propose in our present number, after making some few rambling observations, to look at Class XXVII., which includes manufactures in mineral substances for building or decorations; cements, bricks, and terra cotta.

Nothing has yet occurred to mar the success of the undertaking, and it may now be reasonably expected that nothing will occur. On Whit-Monday large crowds filled every portion of the building:—as Chancer says in his prophetic prefiguration of the undertaking:—

"—there came entering in the hall,  
A right great company withal,  
And that of sundry regions  
Of all kinds of conditions,  
That dwell in earth beneath the moon,  
Poor and rich.

Such a great congregation,  
Of folks as I saw none about,  
Some within and some without,  
Was never seen nor shall be more!"

Yet all went orderly and well,—very little inconvenience was felt, except at a few of the popular points, such as the great diamond, the Queen of Spain's jewels, and the Austrian sculpture-room.† The Queen and Prince Albert continue their visits, and if we are not mistaken will know more about the Exhibition before the end of it than any other persons. We have on more than one occasion had the opportunity of admiring the earnest and systematic manner in which our Sovereign and her illustrious consort have pursued their examination of the various works submitted to them. We understand that her Majesty has purchased, amongst other things, a fine service of china by Copeland to send to the Emperor of Austria, in return for the Gothic bookcase

and album in the Austrian room, presented to the Queen by the Emperor. This bookcase, together with the bed and other furniture in this department, was designed by Mons. De Bernardis, architect, now in London, and is full of beauty. As a bed, and as a bookcase, we should not give to either unqualified praise, but for elegance of drawing, and luxuriance of fancy, these are scarcely surpassed by anything in the building. There is an exquisite sideboard in the French department, by Fourdinois; and we must not omit mention of the "Kenilworth Buffet," in the Fine Arts Court: Messrs. Cookes and Son, of Warwick, by whom this buffet was designed and executed, have published an illustrated account of their work. The carved relieves are taken principally from Scott's "Kenilworth," and the oak tree of which the sideboard is composed grew near the castle,—the scene of that immortal romance. Much of the carving is exceedingly good, but if Messrs. Cookes be of our mind they will dismiss or modify the bears.

Before we go into Class XXVII., we would point out two cleverly constructed staircases, near the machinery, by Langley Banks. These are 23 feet high, and mainly depend on wrought-iron straps 5½ inches wide by ½ the thick, one on each side of each flight, with twelve bolts from side to side.

The English mineral manufactures relating to building are, for the most part, together, on the north side of the nave at the west end. In this department Magnus's manufactures in enamelled slate, especially a bath-room, occupy a prominent place. Some of his tables in imitation of Florentine mosaics are exceedingly well done. Enamel is scarcely the right word for the process, but the colour is so intimately blended with the slate that it is scarcely possible to chip it off without removing also a portion of the slate. Of real mosaic work there are many very good specimens, as, for example, Redfern's marble mosaic table, chiefly composed of the productions of Derbyshire, Woodruff's tables, and Woodley's inlaid Devonshire marbles. Bovey exhibits a chimney-piece in a new material, Yealm Bridge slate and Polyphant freestone: and there are other very interesting applications of Devonshire marbles, Aberdeen granite, Cornish granite, Serpentine, and Irish marbles.

The English mosaic works are finished better than the foreign specimens exhibited, although some of the latter are superior in art.

Orsi and Armani exhibit their metallic lava in its various shapes and applications: the value of this material for pavements, especially in damp places, seems now to be generally admitted.

Francis and Son have formed a screen of Parian cement, marbled in parts in imitation of Verd-antique, Jasper, and Sienna. The peculiarity of this material, which is naturally of a pure white colour, is, that when applied on the walls or laths,—the specimen exhibited is entirely on laths,—it crystallizes so rapidly that it may be painted on the following day, or papered, with papers of the most delicate tints. By its use a newly-built house, which, under the ordinary plastering would be many months before it could be safely inhabited, becomes perfectly dry in a few days. We have heard of a house, finished with this material, being painted and papered and inhabited with

comfort in thirteen weeks from the day of laying the first brick of the foundation.

Lord Lovelace's ornamental bricks are better in intention than execution: they want sharpness and regularity. Haddon's Rhomboidal bricks (to secure bond, are ingenious, but will not come into use. Ambrose's bricks, and Luff's bricks are good specimens. The earthenware architecture exhibited by Bowers and Co., of Tunstall, is sharp and good, but need not take the shape of "imitations of oak carved cornice and rosewood Gothic cornice." Workman's patent for waterproofing bricks should be inquired into.\* Peake's ferro-metallic ware; Brown's tiles (of Surbiton); and Haywood's metallic tiles, are all too well known to need remark. Rufford's bath in one piece, made with fire-clay pisted with porcelain, is a good application of pottery.

We have already mentioned and illustrated the buildings put up in this department by the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, and will only add now that the cottage stove in it, there called "Nicholson's," ought to be called *Leslie's*. Mr. Leslie's stove, as now improved, consists of a solid lump of fire clay, bottom, sides, and back, and is 4 inches only in depth.

Margett's and Co., of Oxford, have a font very well carved. So too is R. Brown's sepulchral monument; but we must especially praise a statue of St. Peter, in a canopied niche, by Lane and Lewis, of Clifton.

Cowen's gas retorts are equal to anything of the sort we have ever seen. Ramsay's are also very excellent. Harper and Moors have some glass-house pots which seem very good. Pots for this purpose remain in the furnace till they are worn out or broken, and have been known to last upwards of two years. The vessel called a curvette is used to convey the melted glass from the interior of the furnace to the casting table. The sudden transition makes this a severe task for the vessel. For such purposes the clay must be free from iron or other mineral substance, or the colour of the glass would be injured.

A large glass-house pot will be found in the American department, exhibited by Mr. Hartley, of Sunderland.

Blanchard's specimens of terra-cotta are very good: examples from the same establishment have stood well many years. There are some good specimens, too, from the estate of Mr. Betts, of Aylesford. Doulton and Watts exhibit some excellent ware. And Messrs. Minton maintain their eminence in encaustic and other ornamental tile work by a very beautiful collection of their various works. Singer and Co. of Vauxhall, have a very good specimen of their mosaic pavement of highly vitrified coloured clays. Some specimens of this description of pavement in foreign departments are of an inferior character.

Robins and Aspin have fitted up illustrations of the strength of Portland cement. They show forty-two ordinary bricks adhering one to the other by means of cement alone; and a mass of the cement which required 151 tons' weight to crush it. The Portland cement used in London as a stucco for external work, we are bound to say, varies greatly in quality. Some of it is quite worthless in that position.

J. B. White and Sons also illustrate the strength of Portland cement, but their speci-

\* The cost of waterproofing is 4s. per thousand for small bricks; and something more for bricks of an inferior quality.

\* We may mention here "The Synopsis of the Contents of the Great Exhibition," by Mr. Robert Hunt, published by Messrs. Byles and Clowes, as a very comprehensive though brief introduction. Mr. Hunt, we see, is about a "Hand Book" of larger scope.

† This room contains some fine works of art. The over-much praise which has been bestowed on the villed statue here, by the way, will doubtless lead many to try what is as truth but an easy trick.